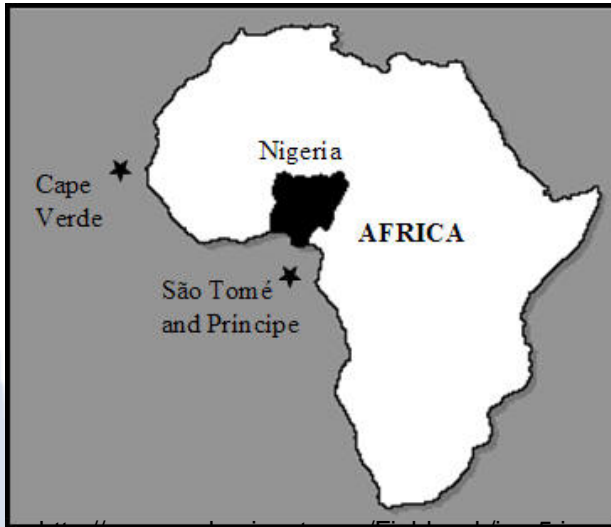# OLPC in São João

Instituting and Developing One Laptop per Child at the São João Secondary School

São Tomé e Príncipe
Beth Santos, 2009

São Tomé and São João

http://www.pedrovicente.org/Fieldwork/img5.jpg

http://www.cia.gov

São Tomé e Príncipe
- Portuguese-speaking, in Gulf of Guinea
- Two islands: São Tome (30 mi x 20 mi, pop 140,000), Príncipe (pop 6,000)
- Second-smallest country of Africa (Seychelles is first)
- Independent from Portugal about 30 years ago, rough history of slavery

São João Secondary School
- 612 6th graders, 730 5th graders
- 5th grade meets 7:00am-12:00pm, 6th grade meets 12:30pm-5:30pm
- Normal for students to repeat grades due to lack of attendance and note-taking, as well as a final pass/fail exam
- Received 100 laptops through OLPC in spring of 2009, delivered by students at the University of Illinois

The Key Players

- **PAUL Adams:** Professor at Univ of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, contacted STeP UP for help identifying a school in São Tomé to give to.

- **NED Seligman:** Director of STeP UP (São Tomé e Príncipe Union for Promotion), an NGO that replaced the Peace Corps about 10 years ago.

- **BETH Santos:** STeP UP volunteer Oct-Dec 2009, learned XO platform, coordinated and gave computer classes

- **JAMES Neves:** Hired by Paul for Portuguese-speaking help. Communicates between STeP UP, Univ of Illinois and São João school. Assists in cultural understanding, speeds up long processes, knows people.

- **ELVES Reis: J**ames' brother, took a computer parts class. Willing to help São João school with technical difficulties.

- **MIGUEL Afonso da Boa Esperança:** Computer teacher at São João school, taking over helm as XO program director

- **ALLEN Costa:** STeP UP volunteer, working with Ned to develop pedal desks to generate energy for laptop use
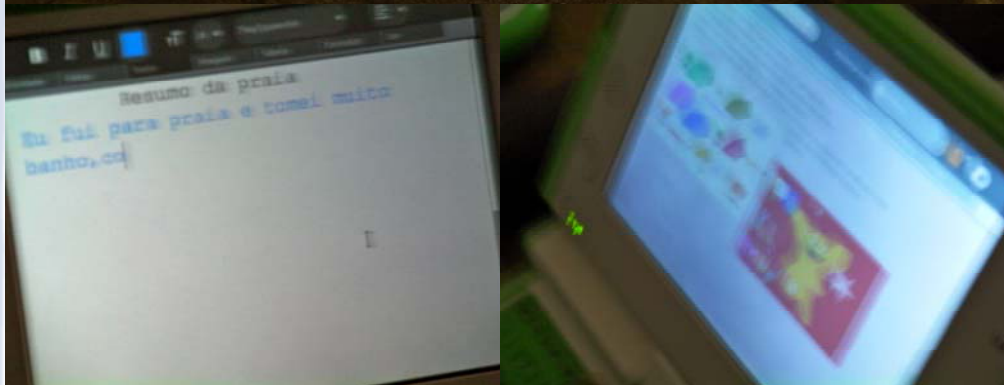
The Timeline

- **Spring 2009:** São João receives 100 computers from OLPC. About 90 go to students, 6 to teachers and 4 are out of use for reasons I do not know.

- **Summer 2009:** Volunteers from Univ of IL come to teach students basic computer use in short summer program. STeP UP identifies need to keep computer program moving.

- **October 2009:** Beth Santos arrives as volunteer with STeP UP. James and Beth arrange for computers to be taken home daily by students. Work with Miguel and other teachers to institute a weekly Saturday program for students with computers. Beth begins translating Help program into Portuguese.

- **October-December 2009:** Saturday morning classes take place weekly from 9am-12pm. Students arrive at 8am and wait for teachers. Take small break at 11am. Often receive homework assignments to be completed by the following week.

- **December 2009:** Christmas break; Beth leaves. Develops a guidebook for teachers' future use. Teachers are instructed to start computer class up again after break in January. Will update Beth weekly with programs, questions and news.

- **June 2010:** School year ends, students turn in their computers for cleaning and reflashing. Possible summer program.

- **August 2010:** Beth returns to help clean and reflash computers. Also hopes to bring more computers with her. Helps begin second year of computer use at São João.

Kicking Off

- Arranged space with Director José António, who opened the school for us on Saturday mornings to give computer classes

- Teachers had their own private computer class the first week

- Talked about the reason for my presence- showing the teachers how to run these classes so they can eventually do it on their own

- Students met every Saturday from 9am-12pm. Small recess at 11am, homework

- Many students liked to stay after class to play games.

- Each class devoted to a new activity or subject

- Instituted teacher meetings every Friday to

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Class, Topics and Planning

- **Week 1:** Basic Intro

- **Week 2:** Interviewing friends (HW: interview parents- Miguel's class: graded)

- **Week 3:** Presentations in front of class, newspaper

- **Week 4:** Newspaper- Malaria

- **Week 5:** [Internet,] Scratch

- **Week 6:** [Internet,] Paint

- **Week 7:** Field trip to the beach / VOA interviews

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Fun Anecdotes

- How to shut the computer down
- Kids with computers on the street

- Making their own recordings
- Kids that come to class that aren't students

Challenges: The Computers

- Not recharging

- Losing Programs

- Connecting to Internet

- Help program in English

- Scratch, Turtle Art in English

- Unresolvable hardware problems (keys that don't work, broken screens-Kadema story)

- The Language Barrier

Challenges: São Tomé

- **ENERGY, ENERGY, ENERGY**

- Bringing computers home- good care

- Teacher payment

- Huge class size

- Disproportionate number of computers

- Lack of money in São Tomé- just not enough in such a small country

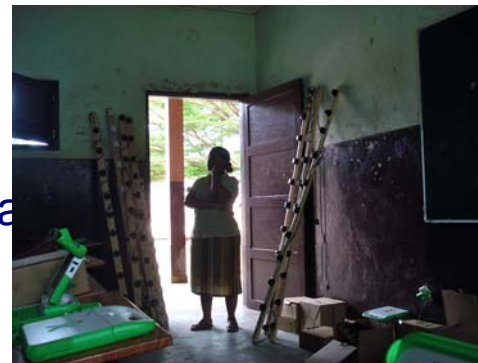- Can only purchase 100 computers at a time

The Evolution of the Teacher Role

Phase 1: Not knowing what the hell they were doing

Equal excitement and interest as the kids; Beth is primary teacher

Phase 3: Beth splits teaching role with tea

4: Beth hides in teachers' lounge fixing computers while teachers hold class

-Culture clashes during slow passing of the torch-

Teachers receive guidebook and are instructed to keep in regular touch. Beth prays (current phase)

Plans for the Future

- Getting the teachers to take personal ownership of the project (ongoing)

  – Headed by Miguel

  – **Guia de Problemas**

  – Teachers will email Beth every week with u

- Pedal-powered desks

  – Using São Tomeans to create desks

  – Tried to get generator but rejected

  – **See the plans we're using**

- Need: 500 computers

  – Idea of program is not to learn *how* to use computers but to actually *use* them in all disciplines

  – **Proposal Draft**

http://www.liliputing.com/2009/10/olpc-afghanistan-builds-pedal-power-system-for-xo-laptop.html

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- Fundraising through http://bethstepsup.blogspot.com. Selling kids' photography.

For More Information...

http://bethstepsup.blogspot.com

http://www.stepup.st